

WIVES MUST GIVE HELP

Otherwise Movement For
Better Farm Conditions
is Doomed to Failure, is
Conclusion Reached By
Miss Ashby.

WOMAN DELIVERS GREAT ADDRESS

Says if a Boy's Mother Or-
dains Him For Farm
Work There Will Be No
Doubt Whatever About
His Success.

People interested in the uplift movement and the various other movements having to do with the betterment of social and economic conditions, sometimes forget that women are as vitally interested in these movements as are the men. For instance, at the Conservation Congress at Kansas City a great deal was said about the farmer and very little about the farmer's wife, when as a matter of fact there are just about as many of the latter as there are of the former. Also, the farmer's wife plays just as important a part in the domestic economy as does her husband, although that fact seemed to be overlooked at the congress.

It remained, however, for one of the speakers to call to the attention of the delegates in a most forcible manner the fact that they had made something of a mistake in arranging their program. This speaker was Harriet Wallace Ashby, whose address on the "Farmer's Wife" was the equal of any delivered at the convention. For the benefit of the women readers of the Republican and of all others who may be interested in this topic the speech is reproduced. It is as follows:

The conservation movement, of which this National Conservation Congress is the exponent, has for its object the transmission of our natural resources, unimpaired, to posterity.

Any movement for the promotion of the farmer's interest must, if it is to

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be a success, receive the support not only of the farmer, but also of the farmer's wife. The first problem of the farmer is how to increase farm products through better farming; the first problem of the farmer's wife is how to improve the condition of the farm home. The mistake of the husband in his sphere during one season may be corrected in the next; the mistakes made by the wife in rearing her children are never entirely corrected.

Believing, as I do, that the great problems of farm life as they pertain to us wives and mothers can only be solved through co-operation and organized effort, I wish to advocate the union of farmer's wives in country women's clubs with the object of breaking up the monotonous routine of farm life and for the discussion of anything and everything pertaining to the betterment of farm home.

The salvation of most families depends on the mother; she is the one who does much to make for the happiness, health and long life of her family. The health of any mother is liable to fall under her responsibilities; the farm mother is especially subject to physical breakdown, for she not only bears the responsibility of rearing her family, but she also shares the anxieties of her husband if, as should always be the case, the farmer's wife is his business partner and assistant farm manager.

The farmer's wife is a most important factor in the conservation of the soil, for she will in a large measure determine the efficiency of the farmer. Then, too, the attitude of the wife toward the farm, and her success in making a happy farm home largely determines whether or not the country boy remains on the farm.

The average country boy is devoted to his mother. How that mother would like to clear the obstacles from his track, and to give him the best of the world affords, if the mother feels that the farm offers no future for her boy, the chances are the farm will lose the boy. The training which the boy reared in the city must secure before he can be an efficient farm worker, and for which he must spend time, money and enthusiasm, is the very training which the country boy absorbs from his infancy, and which makes up the most valuable filler of the soil.

The farmer's wife has for so many years taken no thought for herself that her now misguided conscience reproaches her if she leaves home when there is work to be done, to attend a club meeting, or if she spends even so small a sum of money to save herself. A neighborhood club, with its exchange of experiences with labor-saving tools will teach the folly of expending strength and energy when by spending a little money to secure convenience and ease in work, the farm mother may be conserved to her family, and continue to be a help in the busy world. All farm women have, in a large degree, the same experiences, and therefore they can and should help each other. They should meet to discuss problems of mutual interest; they should organize country clubs with the object of securing the best conditions in their home life; of broadening the outlook of the home; of encouraging a social spirit and of elevating the character of farm life.

One of the most vital problems with which the farmer's wife has to do is how to shorten the farmer's work day. The practice of working from sun up to nightfall and afterwards doing the chores is driving the boys from the farm. If all the farmers in a neighborhood would quit work in time for a six o'clock supper, a long stride would be taken towards making the farm home an ideal home. Most business men work closes with the day, but how about the farmer and his family? When townspeople are at leisure our husbands and sons are milking the cows, bedding the horses, and doing the rest of the chores. They wear overalls so many hours of the week that they are not entirely at ease in other clothes. They are too tired to keep up their interest in the outside world, frequently falling to sleep over the newspaper. Indeed, to bed is about the only place this ex-

hausted man of the early evening is fit to go, for a tired man is not a social creature.

Washing dishes after a late supper with a nodding husband in the next room and your nearest neighbor from a quarter to a mile away does not foster love for the farm. It need not be wondered at that we are insisting that the farm day must be shortened and some time be given to the development of the mental and spiritual as well as the physical side of the family.

You may remember how the little wife, Glory Maguire, as she looked through the windows at rich children's parties used to lament: "Oh, the good times going on in the world, and me not in them!" We farmers' wives want some of the good times that are going on in the world for our children; we want a social center, a club room where neighborhood gatherings can be held. We want a neighborhood library, a live church and an up-to-date school. If our children are to be more than little animals, they must go to church and Sabbath school; they must have a well ventilated, well lighted school room and an experienced teacher.

Men and women of mature judgment are placed at the head of town schools, where suitable courses of instruction and the most approved methods are pursued. The graded school teacher refers any case of insubordination, any report of vulgarity, any question of discipline, to her superintendent, yet these same teachers have

been required to take months of training and practicing on country pupils before they were permitted to teach in town under a superintendent.

The country schools should have trained teachers; teachers of sound judgment in understanding the nature of the child and tact in dealing with him. A live, progressive teacher in every country neighborhood is often the little heaven which "heaveneth the whole lump." We need fewer classes in the country schools; the large study periods are productive of inattention and mischief; if a child is permitted to spend this study time in filling and reading inferior fiction, he loses the power of concentration on his lessons and his taste for solid reading.

We need a well selected library planned for systematic readings; we need recitation benches and desks which will not produce spinal troubles. We need attractive school rooms, better furniture, good pictures and instructive maps. Part of the returns of the farm, invested in the school is one of the farmer's best investments, for all the improvements in the condition of farm life must come through education. Many helpful innovations on the farm have come about through a discussion of what the child learned at school.

We also need better playground facilities. Thousands of country children don't know how to play. When they are at school there is nothing to play with; when they are at home there are chores, unending chores, to be done.

There is work right here for country women's clubs to do in supplying the school grounds with tennis, croquet, and any other equally wholesome and good sports which children can enjoy. Hence we must plan to meet and discuss our mutual problems. We need the stimulating influence which an exchange of ideas and the enthusiastic co-operation of club membership brings. We can accomplish much by the concerted effort which can only follow a reasonable getting together on the part of the farmers' wives. Working the handle of a dry pump won't bring results that a little printing brings. Women won't attend a club unless they get results; they must have something to help them through the week—reading courses and a study program as well as the social half hour. We should study dietetics and learn how to balance the day's food; to provide such articles as will feed as well as fill the family stomach. Man must eat to live, but he need not eat nearly so much if we give him the right kind of food. The more we study our business, the more attractive it becomes; when we cease studying it, we lose interest in our work. So country women are organizing clubs for discussion and study. When a club is conducted in an orderly manner, and every member made to feel personally responsible for its success, when its membership is small enough to seem like a big family, yet large enough to gain and hold interest of the members, it will work a revolution in a country neighborhood. Wherever a country women's club has been organized, the women report that it gives them new energy for their home work. Out of a small club at Adair, Iowa, has grown so many smaller clubs that a joint picnic of the members and friends brought out a crowd of nearly 1,000 people. These ladies have issued a cook book with the proceeds from which they are enlarging their sphere of usefulness.

Another club, the Daughters of Ceres, at Bedford, Iowa issue a calendar for the year's work which compares favorably with the work of any club. Country women's clubs are usually short of money, and difficulty is sometimes experienced in securing books for study. Would it not be well for every state to supply a reading

course for farmer's wives after the example of the Cornell Reading Course? If the government would send out a bulletin containing the essential rules of order for country clubs it would be a great help in conducting meetings. A meeting must be regarded seriously and conducted with dignity to get the best results. A little time and money expended in helping the women is well spent. When Secretary Shaw lived in Iowa he owned a number of farms. It was his practice to give to his tenants' wives pure bred cocks and turkey toms. A neighbor remonstrated with him, saying: "You are making our tenants' wives discontented. We cannot afford to give away pure bred poultry." Secretary Shaw replied: "When I help the women with their poultry, I always get my rent."

The organization of the farmers has

long been the end desired by those who are seeking to promote the country's welfare. By reason of all his previous years of training when he has been acting on his own judgment, and working alone, the farmer is not accustomed to organized effort, and does not fully recognize its value; hence the influence of his wife in this matter is of special help. The farmer knows if he leaves home for any length of time that weeds spring up, fences fall down, cattle get off their feed and cows fall in their milk. Hence he stays at home year in and year out getting deeper and deeper in the rut unless educational and social privileges are brought to him. This the women can and will do through their smiling sun made the man remove his coat when the blustery wind only caused him to hold it tighter. Through the united efforts of the women the far-

mer is going to think less of his taxes and more of his schools; he is going to be one of an army of country men united to secure conservation of the soil through longer leases, conservation of the child through better educational facilities; conservation of the wife through the relaxation of meeting with those of her own sex, and shall I not add: conservation of the few hard-earned dollars in the purse by parcels post? The farmer's wife, in order to conserve to the fullest extent the best interests of the farm, must be filled with the conviction that farming is the most honorable and most worthy of a man of any other pursuit, and is a career worthy of their best endeavors and not merely a makeshift until something better offers. Such a woman will impress upon her children

(Continued on Page 9)

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